

Working with Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD)



Get to Know the Individual

Individuals with IDD are unique. Learn from them and their caregivers about their health conditions and disabilities.

Individuals have their own experiences and stories to share. Encourage individuals and their caregivers to share their experiences and tell their stories.

Individuals should have an active role in planning. Engage them in problem-solving and planning.

Seek to Understand

Consider the need for any accommodations. Become familiar with the individual's communication needs and necessary accommodations.

Use empathic skills to gain perspective. Show interest in learning about the individual's unique perspectives.

Use empathic skills to show compassion. Validate the individual's feelings and experiences using developmentally appropriate and health-literate language.

Commit to honesty and do not judge. Do not paint silver linings or show bias. Focus on the individual's feelings.

Eliminate distractions, be present, and listen. Use therapeutic silence, listen and allow the individual to share.

Take Action

Make individuals feel comfortable when meeting with them in their home or in the office.

Engage and empower individuals in problem solving using person-centered planning.

Focus on one issue at a time. Brainstorm and develop a solution using person-centered approaches.

Work with individuals to create a follow-up strategy and emphasize that they determine their plan.

